

John Mamikonean

History of Taron

Source [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)

"To the brave and mighty giant Vahan, greetings by the help of the gods.

"Although we were saddened by the death of our brother's son, we were amazed by the strength of your wisdom. Now I have come here to [make] friendship and peace, so come to me and vow to pay the taxes to the court and be obedient and retain your previous honor and no longer enter into treachery. Remain well by the aid of the gods."

[Vahan] sent the following reply to him:

"You wicked and weak being, Vaxtang, swine of your class, eater garbage, greetings.

"While I rejoiced over the death of Mihran, I wept over your foolishness. Having heard of his death and acquainting yourself with my God-given strength, how could you dare come against the Church of God? If you have come seeking friendship, why have you brought along your wife? Could it be you want a son from us? And why did you [re]build my city and make fortresses? No, I know that you are false and bite like a dog. Value life more than death and leave the country peacefully. Otherwise, the death you will suffer shall be witnessed by the entire land."

Then [Vaxtang] grew angry and sent 6,000 men against him, to Mush. However, some people informed him, saying: "Rhahan is coming against you with 6,000 [troops]." So [Vahan] went by night against [g32] the enemy encamped at Ccmak, and fell upon them with the sword. They were unable to restrain the horses, for [Vahan's] son, Smbat, had [32] got among them and cut loose 4,000 horses. He had them cross to the other side of the Aracani [river] and led them to the Hashteank' area. They gave 200 horses of the first victory as spoils-share to the church at Glak monastery, for that was their patrimonial home, and he had been baptized there. Now Vahan got [the Iranians] into the swamps, and cut down many of them, wounded many, and drowned 200 men in that swamp.

The prince of Hashteank' had under his control 3,600 men,

the prlnce of Palu had 2,200,
the prlnce of Arjuc' had 3,000,
the prlnce of Elnut/Olnut had 5,000,
prince Vahan had 8,000,

and his son Smbat, 6,000,
in all, 28,000 men.

This entire body was under Vahan's direction. However, he had divided it and left lieutenants everywhere. This gave him 3,000 men that day. The prince of Hashteank' caused a great slaughter there since he hastened to behead Rhahan and put the troops to flight. He [33] harassed them until they entreated him [to stop] and promised to pay them taxes. But Vahan said: "Give us Rhahan's head and we shall let you go." And the [Iranian] soldiers in much anxiety sought for the head, but could not find it. But they seized [Rhahan's] son Vah and turned him over to Vahan. Now the prince of Hashteank' came forward and said: "Either give us Rhahan's head or give us 30,000 *dahekans*." And they gave the 30,000 *dahekans* and turned to go. When Vahan saw that they all were departing, he became filled with the zeal for God, attacked and started to destroy them. [The Iranians] raised a cry, saying: "Oh liar, why do you turn to battle?" And that place was named Arhinch' ("Why"). [The Armenians] drove them into the plain and caused a great slaughter. Less than 500 men fled [g33] and went to Vaxtang and told him what had happened. [Vaxtang] became furious and ordered those who came to him beheaded. Of those 6,000 men not a man remained alive. Not a single one.

Now Vaxtang, moved to a rage because of Rhahan, sent Asur [against Vahan] at the head of 8,000 soldiers. This army came and encamped on the shores of the Meghti [river] and sent the following message to Vahan: "Hey you vile wolf, Vahan. Knowing that you serve the Aryan king, why have you become so shamelessly brazen? Now come to us and be a tax payer. Otherwise you will die like a dog." When [Vahan] heard this, he and his son Smbat went against them with 6,000 [34] men. As soon as [the two armies] were facing each other, Asur started to insult Vahan by calling him a wolf. And [Vahan] replied: "Your epithet for me is accurate, because [like a wolf] I come, destroy, go, and come again." And they commenced battling each other.

Once they joined battle, Vahan's son, Smbat, kept his eye on Asur and approached him. Now when Asur saw that Smbat was a lad, he scorned him and said: "You stone-worshipping bastard, get out of the way so I may move on to the fighting men." [Smbat] replied: "Son of Satan, your name fits you because your sword [*sur*] is as nothing [*a*, "lacking"] and by fighting with a youth you shall acknowledge your defeat." Smbat took his sword and cut off Asur's horse's head. [Asur] fell to the ground and then [Smbat] attacked him and cut off *his* head. He raised the head aloft and said: "Glory to You, Christ, and to St. Karapet who vanquished my adversary." Now while he was saying this, 10 men surrounded Vahan and struck at him mercilessly like men felling a forest. Vahan started to grow weak. Raising his voice he cried: "My son, Smbat, where are you [g34]? Come and help me, old man that I am." For [Vahan] was 88 years old. [Smbat] valiantly attacked them like a swiftly flying eagle, saying: [35] "Help us, St. Karapet." And with that he cut off Asur's son's head severing it, together with the right shoulder, and it fell off. Then Vahan became stronger and cut off the heads of 6 horses. The Lord gave the Iranian army over [to the Armenians] and they chased them until evening. Of the 8,000

soldiers, only 3,000 went back to Vaxtang. [Vaxtang] remained quiet until the next year. That same year *k'aj* Vahan, avenger of the Church, died. He had [his remains] taken to Glak monastery where he is buried in front of the threshold at the door of [the church of] St. Karapet.

Now the next year Vaxtang assembled a force of 20,000 and sent to Smbat [this message]: "Either come so that we may fight, or else be obedient and pay taxes." [Smbat] gathered together 10,000 men and went against [Vaxtang] at Andak. He left 5,000 men on the hill called *Mahu अगरak* ("Field of Death") and himself went with 5,000 against [Vaxtang] to provoke him. Vaxtang sent 10,000 men against [Smbat], thinking that he was alone. The troops came and surrounded him at night. [Smbat] wanted to arise against them by night, but his court priests prevented him. Now he said: "I trust in God that since we have faithfully served St. Karapet he will not abandon us." And he went against the Iranian troops with torches. Suddenly they saw a man with long hair which radiated light, which blinded the enemies' eyes. When *k'aj* Smbat saw this he said to the troops: "Take heart, my sons, [36] and fear not, for St. Karapet has come to our aid and is fighting along with us." Let no one think the matter unbelievable, for [the Iranians] began to fight one another and to kill each other [g35], for the Lord was fighting against them. And they so destroyed them that torrents of blood flowed. That place was called T'il.

When such a multitude had been killed, 200 men were left alive as news-bearers to inform others about the man they had seen during the night, for the enemy also had seen him. [Smbat] himself led their horses to *Mush awan*, to his son (who was named Vahan Kamsarakan after his grandfather) so that the city's infantry would become cavalry and be sent quickly. [Vahan] assembled 2,500 cavalry and sent them to prince Smbat. Now [Smbat] evaded [the Iranians] for 8 days, and prepared his force. After 8 days Vaxtang reached that plain. The next day they readied for war. Now during the night Smbat detached 2,000 cavalry and took them to a hiding place behind the Iranians, and on this side of the hill [he deployed] 3,000. Thus on both sides he had arranged for secret battle. He then divided 8,000 men into 6 groups, and in the morning they organized. So that [the Iranians] not learn about the secret traps, he hastily turned to them and provoked them, to move against him.

[37] Once they joined battle, at first [the Iranians] were vanquishing Smbat. So [Smbat] went onto the hill and said: "Where are you, braves? Come forward." And the braves attacked from all sides and trapped the Iranian army in their midst. They fought until it was impossible to recognize each other except by the sounds of trumpets [g36] and the sight of banners. When Vaxtang and Smbat faced each other Vaxtang said: "Stop, bastard. Though you have killed many before, today you will not slip out of the hands of brave men. Our swords will tear you apart." Smbat, moving into action, struck and split Vaxtang's hip armor, fatally wounded him, and brought him close to falling [to the ground]. Thrusting his lance, [Smbat] struck [Vaxtang's] breast. The lance stuck in, but Smbat was unable to jab it in deeper. He raised his voice and said: "St. Karapet, reveal yourself today to your servants, for we die for your sake, and for the faithful of Christ."

Then he struck [Vaxtang's] shoulder with his lance and the weapon passed in through the armor and through his heart. Pulling out his sword, [Smbat] cut off [Vaxtang's] head, but was unable to keep it, because many men made off with the head.

Now a certain of [Vaxtang's] servants grabbed the head and fled. Smbat reached the fugitive and struck his head with a club, such that [38] the man's helmet split and the bone of his skull gave way before the club, so that [Smbat] could barely pull it out. But when he did, the head fell off and the the servant died. Then another servant took the head and ran. Smbat followed him and said: "Iranians, don't lose your senses. For Vaxtang has already fallen, [the man] who inspired his servants to take his head and flee. Now consider if you must do this." The servant threw [Vaxtang's] head at Smbat's chest and said "Take it, roast it, and eat it. Alas that you did not kill him sooner." Smbat took the head and pursued the servant, saying: "Ay, you traitorous Iranian, why didn't you substitute your own head for that of your lord? Now since you betrayed your lord, I will take your head from you." And with his lance, [Smbat] struck him to the heart, and the lance came out the [g37] other side. The man fell from his horse, whereupon Smbat severed his head, and then returned to the hill in great triumph. The surrounding troops killed Iranians in the place until not a one of them remained except those who were encamped by the camels, 400 men whom he ordered spared since they were fugitives. But he took from them 1040 camels and 8000 horses and asses.

[39] As soon as the battle was ended, [Smbat] ordered them buried in the valleys and ravines. That hill was named Mahu ("Death") Hill. Then Smbat took troops and went against Porp city by night. When the soldiers entered the homes, they killed whomever they encountered speaking Persian, cut off the noses, strung them up, and brought them to Smbat. When the noses were counted they found 4,900 Iranian men, women and children.

Now Vaxtang's son and wife were taken to Aycic' fortress (which was previously called Arcuik') to be kept there. [Smbat] sent to the Iranian king Xosrov and said:

"Give me taxes for 12 years to cover the [cost of the] grass and bread of my country which your forces ate, the wood they burned, the price of the water they drank, the price of the *tachars* which my father Gayl Vahan burned because of your soldiers, and 60,000 *dahekans* for the price of the soap to wash your soldiers' robes (which smelled of death and were blood-drenched) before we could wear them. Otherwise, I shall come against you with 100 men and with all the Iranians captured, I shall take them to Taron and shall chain a dog to your gods so that they bark at you in place of them. Now be quick. Do whatever I have [40] said to do. Otherwise you will see what will befall you."

When [g38] [Xosrov] heard this he mocked Smbat and he wrote no reply to him.

But Vaxtang's brother, Suren, took 100,000 *dahekans* and 9,000 men and came to Taron to buy the wife and son of Vaxtang. Smbat went before him and, receiving Vaxtang's brother Suren with affection, he sent him to Mush. After 10 days Suren asked after his brother's son, wanting to know where he was. Now they showed him the fortress and said: "Over there." And he asked: "Is he herding goats or *dews* there?" Smbat laughed at Suren's *bon mot*, and ordered [Vaxtang's] wife and son brought before him. As soon as they arrived, Suren said: "Mighty prince [ruling] the land of Armenia, will you give them as gifts to the Iranian king"? The prince replied: "I wouldn't even give the Iranian king a dead dog for his dinner without his paying for it, let alone give these two [hostages]. But if you want to buy them, I most certainly will give them over; otherwise, the three of you will go to Arcrunik' and herd goats, and do service at the fortress and ungratefully eat my bread."

Now because Suren was a wise man he said:

"Oh pious and mighty prince, if you made us tend a dog at your gates it would be an honor [41] for us just to be at your court, to say nothing of herding goats. But listen to us and take from us 100,000 *dahekans*, 2,000 camels and 6 Iranian horses, and give us this woman and youth."

The prince said:

"Whatever you brought here is ours, for I'll cut off your head and confiscate what you have. But if you need them, become a Christian and be baptized, and take me and go to the Iranians and these [hostages] with you. Otherwise think up something else."

Now Suren brought 100,000 *dahekans* and led the camels and horses [g39] before him and said to the prince: "Here is your gift." But [Smbat] replied:

"I approve of your gifts, but [Iranian troops] took 180,000 [*dahekans* worth of] wood from K'ark'e and they ate up 400,000 *dahekans* of grass from the plains and 60,000 *dahekans* for the hinds, stags, and rabbits of my country which they hunted and ate. I leave aside the price of water and of bread. But let them pay for the sweet wines of Syria, Salan and Moxr which for these two years they have cut from me and have themselves consumed. And the tax which they took from 6 districts and for the city revenue which they ate, let them pay 300 *dahekans* [1 *ms.*: 400,000]. You become a Christian. Take me to the Iranians and take these [hostages] for yourself."

[42] Suren became gloomy and was unable to speak for 3 days. But then the prince sent to him, saying: "Don't be sad, for I shall do everything according to your will. But come, let us pass to the other side [of the river] and make a pilgrimage to my monastery which my father built." Taking Suren they crossed to the other side of the Aracani, taking the woman and son along. But because [Smbat] wanted to deceive the Iranian, the wife and son and Vahan Kamsarakan were left on the other side, such that should [Suren] cross over, he would be killed. He left 4,000 of his troops at Meghti and [left] the Iranians at the village of the monastery which they called Artic' village. [Smbat] took 400 choice soldiers and [Suren] took 400 of his own, and the two set out for the monastery. When

they reached the Hidden Cross, they dismounted and proceeded to the monastery on foot, since it was impossible for anyone to ascend there on a horse. Similarly [the terrain] from the eastern foot of the valley upward to the church was so steep that no one would dare come up. For if St. Gregory [g40] and Trdat did not dare to come to that place on horse, whoever else would?

Now as soon as they approached the site of the monastery, the [43] clerics came forth and prevented them [from proceeding] because of Suren. So Smbat grew angry and said: "If you Iranians are so abominable that you are unworthy of lairs, how is it that you are worthy of life?" And Varaz, prince of Palunik' attacked Suren, striking him with a sword and cutting off his head. They strangled two Iranian princes by hanging them from a tree, and then returned to the horses. The 300 troops of the prince of Palunik' were hidden on the hill in a small stronghold on Mecamor, below Andak. They rode the horses until they had descended to Mecamor. Those who were in ambush sprang out. They cut down 400 [Iranians] by trapping them between themselves. Then [the Armenians] descended to the other troops and departed. Now as for those who were in the fortress at Artic' village, at night they came out and fell on the Iranians. They cut loose more than 2,500 of their horses and led them to Sroc' valley. Now the Iranian troops had followed the thieves and reached them in the place called Goghoc' ("Thieves'") Spring. The horse-thieves turned upon them and 520 men were hit with slings and bows. They took their horses and added them to the others, making 3,000 horses.

Some of the foot soldiers from the Iranian force had entered the valley, gone into the forest, fell on the horse-thieves and began to cut them down. Now the senior (*awag*) among the horse-thieves [44] who was called Srem/Serem, turned against them, took out his sword and fought them alone, until his comrades returned. As soon as that happened, Srem died, for they had struck him in the heart with an arrow [g41]. They buried him in the same valley which was thereafter named Sremajor. With stones and arrows the comrades went against them and killed many men, putting others to flight. Then they assembled in one place, encamped and ate.

Now some 250 men had gone out of Oghkan to hunt. As soon as they saw the Iranian army unconcernedly at its ease, they stealthily attacked, not allowing anyone to mount his horse. Rather, they surrounded them in the same spot. Five hundred and eight men were killed at that table, and since they were all gathered there, the place was named Zhoghovs ("Assembly").

While this was taking place, Smbat and the prince of Palunik' were hidden in some valley. They sent someone to Meghti, saying: "Hurry and come against them," while they themselves sent 100 men to provoke the Iranian troops. When the soldiers saw this, they attacked and [the two groups] reached each other. When the troops came to Smbat they said "Get onto the hill, for it is a favorable site for a battle, and be careful until our troops arrive." They ascended the hill, but the Iranian forces increased against Smbat and Varaz. The latter two knelt before God and called upon the aid [45] of St. Karapet. "Remember,"

they said "our service, and as you helped us from afar, now do not abandon us at close range." And the aid of God came to them.

The trumpet sounded on the hill. With Smbat leading the right wing and Varaz the left, these two began to drench themselves and their horses in blood. Smbat's sword became stuck to his hand and he could not unstick it, since the blood was glued to the sword and to the hand and it broke off in his hand. Once the Iranians saw that [g 42] [Smbat] was unable to take another sword, they gave word to one another, saying: "Hurry up, for the *k'aj*'s hand is stuck, his God has bound him, and the sword is broken in his hand." Many men surrounded [Smbat]. The weapons crashed over Smbat's head like dry wood splitting. Now he shouted in a loud voice: "Vay, woe is your bravery for you cannot even cut off my head." He said this so that the words would be remembered. But when he saw that they had greatly multiplied against him, he raised his voice and said:

"Where are you, prince of Palunik', brave arm and strong mallet against the enemy, the cane of my old age? Come forward like a brave eagle, for vultures and horned owls have encircled me."

[Varaz, prince of Palunik'] entrusted the left wing of the army to his son Vahan (who built Vahanovit) and [46] he himself, valiantly, like an eagle, went [to Smbat's aid], causing all the horses to quake with fear. Coming to Smbat's aid, he struck an Iranian on the shoulder with his lance and the weapon passed through the horse's spine. He was unable to remove it. At this he mocked him, saying: "Go measure your lance and see how many cubits long it is. Let no one fool you and say falsely that it is 3 fathoms." And with that, [the Iranian] died.

Now Smbat went to the edge of the battle and pinioned an Iranian with his left hand and sword, sacrificing him in that fashion, since warm blood was pouring down and loosening the [stuck] handle. He changed his sword and mounted another horse. As soon as he did so, he saw that 1,000 men had surrounded him again, and that he was caught between [two groups of] 500 men. When they knew that they had horses, [Smbat] struck an Iranian and he fell. [Smbat] took the man's horse and offered it to prince Varaz, saying: "Descend and mount, prince of Palunik'." Now the prince turned on one foot and sat on the horse, [a feat] which astonished the troops. Thus, in the midst of a frightful war, did they change their horses [g43]. No matter how much the [enemy] troops increased, they remained tranquil in their midst. [The enemy] so massed against them that they could find no place to exit.

[47] Some of Smbat's soldiers began to waver. Through the providence of God, they spotted the other Smbat (who was prince of Hashteank') coming, and with him Smbat's son, Vahan Kamsarakan, with 6,000 men. When prince Varaz saw this, he cried out "Son of a *k'aj*, Vahan, where were you that you did not come to [our] aid sooner?" Vahan raised his voice and exclaimed through [his] tears: "Does my poor old father still live, or has he gone to the Lord to rest?" Smbat heard this and said: "St. Karapet came to my aid

as I was about to die at the hands of the impious." Now [Vahan] thanked God and struck forward, cutting a path and advancing in. He cleared one wing while Smbat, prince of Hashteank', cleared the other, and, taking on the [conduct of the] war themselves, they commenced cutting down the leaders. Moving around, Vahan encircled the other wing, and having trapped the Iranian troops in the middle, they destroyed them until evening.

When the sun set, 300 Iranians remained alive and found some way to flee. Since their horses had remained [elsewhere], they went into a valley [on foot], hid themselves, and slept, eluding [the Armenians] until noon of the following day. [The Armenian] troops then came and found [48] them, threw water on them and woke them up. Then they took [the Iranians] to Meghti. And that place was named T'mbrajor ("Valley of Sleep"). Smbat ordered that the corpses be piled one atop the other on the hill, which, because of the carnage committed by Varaz, was named Varazablur. Then they went and spent the night in a village of the monastery named Kenac' vayrk' ("Place of Life"). As soon as they entered the village, old women came before them and sang, praising their many exploits. They said later when the corpses (which had not been removed) started to decay and stink:

"Beasts devoured and grew fat on the bodies Varaz made corpses of. The cat ate and swelled up like a bear. The fox grew prouder than a lion. The wolf, since it ate alot, burst. And the bear died of hunger since what it ate did not stay with it. The vultures, since they were greedy, perched and were unable to leave. The mice, since they carried off much to their holes, wore their feet out."

They said all this, and it suited the reality. The name of the village was called Shirakanik'.

Now as for the men whom they had taken to Meghti, they healed them of their wounds, gave them treasures, horses, and weapons, and sent them to the Iranians. They themselves went to the House of the Lord, gave many gifts to God at [the church of] St. Karapet, and then [49] returned to their homes in joy.

In these very times the venerable Step'annos died. He is buried with the other abbots on Hayrablur ("Hill of the fathers"). Then Vahan took the bishops of the Mamikonean, Palunik' and Hashteank' [Houses] and came to Glak monastery. They ordained as abbot of the monastery Epip'an, who had come from the plain of Duin to the retreat and dwelled on the lands of the church. He became the 22nd [abbot] following Step'annos. He held the priorate for 20 years and went to the council which Heraclius [610-641] held in the 9th and 10th years [g45] of his reign [at which] they anathematized all the heretics. The [heretical] bishop of Hashteank' was driven off to Byzantine lands.

Once more Xosrov sent another army against the rebellious Mamikonean *tun*, [under] the great general [*zorapet*] Tigran, with 20,000 men. As soon as [Tigran] reached Apahunik', he summoned Smbat. However, [Smbat] sent his son Vahan Kamsarakan to see what [Tigran] wanted. When [Vahan] went and found this out, he sent a reply to his father, saying:

"[Tigran] many times promised good things, and many times [50] evil things. But he demands the remains of prince Musegh and of your father Vahan, as well as [the remains] of the wife of Vaxtang and his son whom Varaz killed in battle. 'Otherwise,' says he, 'I shall come to the place [hallowed to] your faith, I shall uproot and ruin it and turn your church into a fire-temple and carry you off to the royal court.' Now this is what he said. He wants to come upon [you] through Hashtank'. I shall go along with him. You [meanwhile] assemble our forces, go to [the church of] St. Karapet and beseech the clerics to pray [for us]. Stay well in the Lord."

When Smbat heard this, he took [Vahan's] letter and went before St. Karapet. He stretched forth his hands before the altar and began to weep and say:

"Arise Lord, and awaken Your forces [g46]. Lord, see, be not silent, do not delay, for the enemy scorns us greatly. May Your will be done. Nonetheless we beg that you recall our efforts for You, for the covenant of our sanctity, by which your blessed name is glorified."

Saying this, he had 12,000 swords brought and placed before the *bema* while the mass was being offered. Then he took them and said:

"Lord we believe in You and that these swords will be the leaven for other swords and that by Your command we shall defeat [the Iranians]. Oh Lord, we have become [51] discomfited and weary from cutting down the impious; those who wiped our swords of rust and blood also are weary. We hope that You will do now as You have in the past."

Then [Smbat] went and assembled the troops—9,040 men. They went and encamped in Hashtank' at a village called Gireh in a well watered place. Tigran came and encamped at Honankek' and sent to Smbat, saying: "Come to me without fear and accept from me treasures and greatness. I shall put a crown on your head and make you the *marzpan* of Armenia. Only give me the bones of Mushegh and Vahan." But [Smbat] seized the emissaries and, heating a spit of iron to red-hot, he placed it as a crown on the brow [of the chief emissary], saying: "Wait! Let me see what gifts I shall receive for your sake since I crowned you." Then he ordered all the men who had come with [the chief emissary] seized, and [the Armenians] severed heads until the 6th hour of the day. That place was named Moguc' ("Mages'") Cemetery, or Mokkunk'.

Now Smbat went onto the mountain called Sremavayr and encamped opposite Tigran. As soon as it was evening, Vahan Kamsarakan, Smbat's son, arose and cut off the head of Tigran's son and of the 3 princes [g47] [52] who were in the same tent. Taking their heads he came to his father. Then he returned to the same place and secretly entered [under the flap of] Tigran's tent. Now when [Tigran] saw the naked sword in [Vahan's]

hand, he did not dare call out to anyone, thinking that [Vahan] wanted to steal the equipage. But Vahan suddenly seized a pillow, quickly threw it down over [Tigran's] mouth, and pounced on him. Another servant of Vahan's entered [the tent] and severed [Tigran's] head. Then he gathered up all the furnishings, precious stones and choice swords, and departed. The Armenian troops were delighted and offered great thanks to God. They [?Iranians] regretted that they had ruined the princes' graves [? ew *apashawec'in, zi zgerezmans ishxanac'n awerec'in*. Lacking in 1 *ms.*].

Now Vahan, filled with wisdom, took 200 leather shields and attached them to 100 wild mules, placing [a piece of] iron on each side of the shield. Then, with 8,000 men under his direction, he went near the camp of [the] Hon who had been substituted for Tigran. He encamped close to the crag which is opposite Taron mountain [3 *mss.*: Tawros mt.]. [53] It was separated from the other camps. Vahan took the 100 wild mules and led them to the edge of the camp with one man going along with every 10 mules. With their swords they goaded the mules into the camp while they themselves followed, sounding war trumpets. They started to cut down those nearby, shouting and terrifying [the Iranlans] and making a great racket. The mules invaded the camp from all directions, frightened by the noises of the shields, the [g48] shouting of the soldiers and the clamor of the trumpets. The [Iranian] troops thought [the attackers] were mounted and that the clanging of the swords was the result of a slaughter. Each [man] could only shriek "Vay!" not knowing the real state of affairs, for the Lord did battle with them.

Now the other [Iranian] troops were unable to advance since it was dark and our army plagued them with nothing but death. They were entirely unable to recall the crag, for the Lord made them dumb. So they left their equipage and fled straight toward the crag. They started to fall down from the heights of gigantic rocks and no one knew what was going on until the noise of the shrieks [54] diminished. Then the Armenian troops saw that the Iranians had been buried. They themselves returned to [the Iranians'] camp and gathered up the equipage, treasure, the horses and camels, and sent them to the Palunik' district. Among the horses, mules, camels and asses they found [a total of] 18,000 [animals] which covered the face of the district. Now as soon as it was morning, they started to inquire after Tigran and his son, but they did not find them. So they went after the fugitives to find out [where the two were] and saw that they had fallen off the cliff. But then [the Iranians] unitedly made Mihrxosrov their prince, and filled with anger they got into battle formation.

Now Smbat had left Vahan as lieutenant during the night, with 4,000 men. There were 2,000 men placed in ambush in two places. [Smbat] himself arrayed other troops in battle formation, giving command of the right wing to the prince of Palunik', Varaz, who was so mighty that no man could equal him. [Smbat] entrusted the left wing to the prince of Hashtank' and left as his body-guard Varaz' son, Vahan. [55] [The two enemies] massed opposite one another. Mihrxosrov and Smbat approached each other, and they began to strike at each other's head. The Iranian army attacked Smbat like [a swarm of] bees. Smbat began to grow weak since he was an old man. He raised his voice and cried:

"Where are you Vahan, my son? Come to me." And he cried out to St. Karapet: "Oh Yovhannes Karapet, baptizer of Christ, the hour has come. Where are the prayers of my holy clerics?" Entering battle [Vahan] scattered the people gathered about his father. Then Smbat took heart, raised his sword and struck at the shoulder of their senior [commander] whose head and part of the shoulder fell to the ground. Putting their swords to work, they caused [the Iranians] to flee as far as the ambushade. Then those lying in wait sprang out and trapped [the Iranians] in their midst. There was great destruction on that day. They tossed a total of 4,000 heads down from the rock named Honenkec'. It was now evening and some 8,000 men of the Iranian troops fled, encamping in Hashteank'. They held a military review there whence the place name Handiseank'. They wanted to go on to Apahunik' by trickery.

Now when Smbat learned that they had gone, he arose and went after them, reaching them the next day. As soon as [the two groups] encamped opposite each other [the Armenians] planned to go against the Iranians and they organized at night. But while they were still at this, some 3,000 soldiers from Apahunik' arrived. When the Armenian [56] troops saw that the forces from Apahunik' had mingled with the Iranians, they abandoned [their position] and fell to the ground. Finding a way out, they descended to the bank of the Aracani [river] through the Markuc' pass, and there they pitched camp. Now the Iranians arose, pursued and harassed them, forcing them against the river. Smbat, placing all his hope on God, said: "Oh Lord, I have long since known the kindness you have shown us. Now look at us, for the enemy is on this side and the river is on the other side [g50]. Behold how the enemy has put us into straits." Making the sign of the Cross over themselves, they turned upon the Iranians. During the battle there appeared to them a man awesome and luminous whose hair shed light. When *k'aj* Vahan saw him and knew that the man was Karapet, he joyously attacked killing 3,000 troops. Driving the rest before him through Asteghunk'/Asteghonk', he forced them to descend until they were opposite the church. [The enemy] had wanted to ascend to the same place and kill the clerics. But the power of the Lord prevented them, and they were unable to cross the valley. The place that they fell back at was called usually Yetsank [1 *ms.*: Yetang; another, Aycsan; another, Ayctan].

Now the [Iranian] troops reached the forest which is opposite the monastery, and they hid there. Vahan hurriedly went there, and [57] putting them to the sword, cut them down leaving not even one [alive] to tell [of the event]. That place was called Mahu Arhit' ("Cause of Death"). Smbat was extremely fatigued that day, but to his aid came Varaz, prince of Palunik'. They drove [Iranian] troops before them, throwing them into the river until they came to the place presently known as Kuray [2 *mss.*: Kuran]. They seized the horses of those who had fled. The prince of Palunik' followed [those fugitives] with many troops and destroyed them. When they arrived there, Varaz said to the Iranians: "Since you are worn out, flee, so that we may kill you." And they replied: "We are lost and shall die," whence the place name Kuray. In that very place [Varaz] began to take them on one by one and to cut off their foreskins—1680 of them. Some 2,000 other

[Iranians] who fled into the river drowned. As for the brigade [of the Iranian army] [g51] which Smbat destroyed, he found them crossed over to the other side [of the river] through Hoveank' over the fugitives on the mountain. But men from the stronghold came from behind and with arrows and sling-stones and rocks and killed 2800 men. Those who survived, numbering 1040, went to Xosrov among the Iranians. But he sent yet another army to Taron.

In the same year, Smbat died. He had his remains taken to his [58] fathers' mausoleum at Glak monastery where he is buried by the door of [the church of] St. Step'annos, built by that Step'annos whose mother was torn asunder. And he placed in St. Step'annos the left toe of the blessed proto-martyr [Step'annos]. In the same year that Smbat passed, abbot Epip'an also was translated to God after [a directorship of] 20 years. Then Dawit' sat on his [episcopal] throne for 3 years, being the 23rd [abbot in succession] from St. Gregory. In these days, Tiran, Vahan's son, was baptized in the monastery of Glak in [the church of] St. Karapet, in the abbotship of Dawit'.

5.

After 18 years discord arose again between the Iranians and Vahan. Xosrov sent 50,600 soldiers to Taron who arrived there in a great rage, wishing to pass to Glak monastery in order to take the bones of [their] enemies. They came and encamped in Mush. Now Vahan summoned his son *k'aj* Tiran and said: "My son, do not be deceived into sin because you are mighty, and do not be tricked by beautiful women because of your youth. Instead, remember your [59] fathers and with what sanctity and purity they served God. Do [g52] not forget service to St. Karapet, for in battles it was he who aided us. If you want to live long, do not be tempted into debauchery as you have not. And should I die in war, have [my remains] taken to our monastery. Serve God and His clerics with holiness as I have, for I have neither been deceived by beauty nor have I dispossessed or harassed the unfortunate. For I looked after everyone under by authority, men, women, and children, believers in Christ, like brothers and families of my *tun* as my fathers did, with concern. Son, if you do the same, the Lord will strengthen you. Now let us go to battle."

And they went to battle. They sent to abbot Grigor, the 25th [in succession from St. Gregory] who sat on the patriarchal throne for 8 years, and they took along to the battle 385 hooded clerics. When the battle began on the banks of the Aracani [river] by the forest called Kaghmaxeac' hill, the black-robed clerics wearing hair-shirts and cowls [also were present] and for every 10 men was a bell-ringer, and between every 2[men] a gonfalon on a high holder. They massed there opposite each other, on the other [60] side of the river in the plain. When the enemy saw this they were astonished. [The Iranian commander] Varduhri did not enter battle, but said: "I shall see what they do." When the battle began and the Vahaneans wanted to flee [or: "the shield-bearers wanted to flee,"]

then [the clerics] bowed their knee and in unison beseeched God with tearful prayers: "Oh Lord, win our battle. Oh Karapet, hearken to the voices of your servitors." Having said this together, they rose to their feet, made the sign of the Cross, and turned upon the enemy, with the bell-ringers boldly sounding forth [g53].

Vahan looked at the clerics' brigade and saw in their right wing a youth of awesome appearance wearing on his head a purple crown and a cross. From his raiment fire shone forth. Before him, [Vahan] saw two other youths with wings. When the enemy saw this they went berserk, and piled into the river. Those who reached the other side headed for Meghti. Now Vahan called to his son Tiran and to the other troops, saying: "Behold the Lord of Creation, Christ, appears among his servants. For He is their king, and the king of us all Who hearkened to the voices of His servitors and descended to save them and us. Now go after the enemy!" The impious [Iranians] reached Meghti, found 12 old clerics there and killed them. [61] They are buried by the door of the church, since that was their request.

Vahan entered the river, tied the horse on his back together with his weapon, and crossed to the other side, to the village named Parsic' *dem* [3 mss.: *Parsic' koghmn*]. All of Vahan's soldiers assembled there. And the clerics were praying in the same place until the abbot reached them bearing the head of [the Iranians'] chief, Varduhri. Vahan expelled the [enemy] soldiers and reached the plain above Matravank', where he made a circle and ranged his troops in battle. Varduhri and Vahan's son, Tiran, approached each other and Varduhri said: "Sorcerer! You are exalted in sorcery, and by sorcery you would vanquish the Iranian *k'ajs*." Tiran retorted "If I am a sorcerer, then obey a moment, so I may show you your horse's tail." And [Tiran] quickly struck off [Varduhri's] right foot together with the greaves. [Varduhri] leaned to the side and fell. Tiran said: "Varduhri, don't blame me. Your head was bent over and made you fall. Let me balance your load." And he cut off his head and gave it to a servant, saying: "Keep this for when we encamp at Matravank' [g54] and play polo in front of [the church of] St. Karapet, for it was [Varduhri] who insulted [Karapet's] clerics."

They got the Iranian soldiers between them and began to close [62] in on them. The prince of Palunik' separated off two princes and chased them on to Hashtank'. As soon as he reached a plain-like place [one of the] fugitive princes became terrified while the troops were far away, and he was unable to flee or to fight, and so he remained. A certain one of the servants asked: "Why are you frightened, oh prince?" He replied: "I see the Palak prince but I cannot go [to him]. But they were unable to learn what [this statement meant]. The man died on the spot. Then [the prince of Palunik'] cut off his head and took the two princes' sons who had come along, and had them held. Then he went after the fugitives. Reaching the other [fugitive] prince, [Varaz] said: "Fall to the ground willingly, Iranian, or else you shall fall unwillingly." But [the man] fled. Varaz went after him and struck him with his lance, which went through the shoulder and on through the horse's spine, and he said: "Fall now." The name of that place was called Nerk'inanknis ("Fall Down").

Continuing on a short way he reached yet another prince and asked him: "Will you fall willingly or unwillingly?" The Iranian turned about and severed Varaz's horse's head and he fell. But [Varaz] ran [63] underneath the Iranian's horse and struck the horse's tendons, saying "Now you too fall." That place was named Vayrankanis ("Fall Down"). Now those [troops] who had remained at Pughk' took the two princelings and the head of the prince who had been frightened and brought them to Varaz. That place was named Pughk' [2 *mss.*: Poghk, another, Poghak]. Then Varaz returned to his son Smbat and they descended to Vahan. [Vahan] had cut down many men and was extremely fatigued. Fugitives were fleeing across the field, whence the placename P'andik [3 *mss.*: P'oyadik].

Now the clerics once again came from Kaghmaxeac' hill to a [g55] hill opposite the Matravank' plain. A brigade of Iranian fugitives came upon them and beseeched the clerics to save their lives. Now when the other brigades of the prince of Hashteank' arrived, they asked: "Where are the Iranians who came after the fugitives?" But the clerics would not hand the Iranians over to them. Then the prince of Hashteank' came up and asked: "What became of the Iranians?" [The clerics] replied: "Behold, they are with your fathers [*hayr*]." And that place was thenceforth called Hayrkert. Then the battle ceased. They turned the fugitives toward Meghti, finding [64] 480 of them. They gave them treasures and horses and released them to [go to] the Iranians as news-bearers [to relate] the wonders they had encountered from [the Armenians'] clerics.

Five virtuous princes conducted the war of Taron:

Mushegh',
Vahan,
Smbat,
Vahan Kamsarakan, and
Tiran.

Blessed be their memory.

Patmut'iwn (History)

During the kingship of Heraclius [610-41], the Iranian king Xosrov grew strong. He went as far as Jerusalem, ruined the city, set fire to the gospels, captured the holy Cross, took it to the Iranians, and put it and [the city's religious] vessels in reserve, until the 17th year of his reign. And [when] Heraclius grew strong in his kingdom, he went to the Iranians, slew Xosrov, and retrieved the holy Cross along with the captives. Then he passed over many [65] lodging-places, [arrived in Armenia], and gave many relics to the land of Armenia and to the grandee princes. When he went to Ereznawan, an attendant stole a

large piece of [the Cross] during the night, and wanted to flee. Now someone who found out informed the king who took back the relic from him and cut off [the thief's] head. [Heraclius] then went with his troops to Caesarea where he gave the relic to the patriarch of Caesarea named Yovhan. Then he returned to the royal city of Constantinople. The same year Vahan Kamsarakan went to Caesarea, gave the patriarch Yovhan 36,000 *dahekans* and brought [a piece of] the Cross to [the church of] St. Karapet in Glak monastery where it was placed in a cupboard on the altar. It remained there for 6 years.

Now the prince of the Arjk' area was Gorg Shataxos ("Gorg the Blabbermouth") who named his district Shatax after his nickname. [Gorg] came to the plain of Taron, to a man named Cicarhnik who had built a small *awan* and named it Cicarhn. The prince implored Cicarhnik: "Find some way to steal the Cross since the church warden is your relative. Bring the Cross to me and you will receive 6,000 dram." [66] But Cicarhnik replied: "Keep your money. I shall take the Cross and come to your country, select a secure place, build an *awan* and name it after myself." The prince agreed to this and went home. Now Cicarhnik sent his wife, sons, and clan (*azgatohm*) to the prince of Arjk' while he himself went to the church warden and explained the matter to him. The man agreed [to cooperate], removed [the Cross] from its repository and accompanied [Cicarhnik] to the prince's country. He chose a site and built a church, and they placed the holy symbol of the Lord there. The *awan* was named Cicarhn.

Now at that time the *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, Nerses (who was [g57] born in Tayk' and who built [the church of] the Blessed Mother of God at Vagharshakert) came to see the holy Cross. Vahan took the *kat'oghikos* and came to Glak monastery, and he requested the holy Cross. The [church] attendants sought for, but were unable to find it. The princes, the *kat'oghikos*, and the bishops mourned, and for 7 days Vahan neither ate nor drank. While he was asleep by the door of the church on Friday, he saw himself, prince Vahan, and a certain luminous man crossing over the threshold of the church. The man said to him: "They stole me and they built Arjk'. So permit it [to stay there], since that country is secure, and they cannot steal it from there". Then [Vahan] awoke full of joy and hurried to give the *kat'oghikos* the good [67] news that the Cross was at Arjk'. Overjoyed, the following day they held a celebration and then went to the place [mentioned in Vahan's vision], seized the cleric who had stolen the Cross, and gave him to the *kat'oghikos* who had the man's two eyes gouged out since he had robbed St. Karapet. Vahan seized Cicarhnik and beheaded him, while the prince of Arjk' was placed in Oghkan [fortress] until he paid 100,000 *dahekans*. Then [Vahan] built the church which stands on Mush hill named after his younger son, Step'annos (who is buried at the door of the same [church]). Now Vahan gave the Cross to the bishop of Arjk' and he set up over the church 7 priests so that each year one would have [charge of] it; and they arranged to give 6,000 *drams* to the Armenians of Taron.

This *History* was written and placed in the church of Cicarhn. This was in the year 130 A.E. [681] and the year 427 of the Roman Era. Accurately written, the *History* was placed in [the church of] St. Karapet at Glak monastery by order of Nerses, the

29th *kat'oghikos* of Armenia [in succession] from St. Gregory, and during the principality of Vahan Mamikonean. [Vahan] was the 32nd prince of the Mamikonean clan [in succession] from Mushegh. He was prince of Taron for 30 years, and *marzpan* for 10 years.

[68] After the recital of such accounts, mourning descended upon our tranquil country, for Vahan was gathered to his fathers. He is buried at the door of [the church of] St. Karapet, having been prince of Taron and Apahunik' for 30 years. But his son Tiran, prior to Heraclius' going to Iran, went to [king] Xosrov's court at the command of the Iberian/Georgian prince Vashdean and his own father Vahan. Being thus among Xosrov's adopted sons, he became *marzpan* of Armenia. He took many troops and came against the Byzantines as though in war. But he sent [a message] to the emperor, saying: "Do not be frightened by my coming. Instead, give me a city where I may assemble the Armenian troops and I shall be your auxiliary." And between them he made an oath of friendship, [being] considered not only the *marzpan* of Armenia and Iran, but also *dimeslekos* of all the Greeks.

When the Iberian prince Vashdean heard about this, he sent to Xosrov, saying: "Tiran has betrayed you and joined the Byzantines. Now send 8,000 cavalry by way of Vanand, and I shall deliver him up to you." The king called the Iberian princeling, Jojik [g59], and made him *marzpan*, and he had the prince of Siwnik' beaten up and removed as [a person belonging to a] treacherous and deceitful *azg*. [Xosrov] himself sent 5,000 troops to Vashdean. Now Vashdean wrote a letter to [69] Tiran as follows: "You have aggravated [Xosrov] with your migration. But come and we shall consult about the king."

As soon as [Tiran] read the letter, another letter arrived the same day from Vashdean's sister's son, Hamam, acquainting [Tiran] with the treachery before him from the troops who had come from Iran. He immediately wrote a letter to Vashdean reprimanding him for his plot. Vashdean grew angry and had Hamam's feet and hands lopped off. Then, taking the Iranians, [Vashdean] crossed the Chorox river and went to Hamam's city, named Tambur, which he attacked with fire and sword and enslaved. Now the blessed bishop of the city, Manknos, severely cursed the prince. [Vashdean] ordered the Iranians to kill the priests in the church named Holy Zion. The bishop had silently prayed to God to ask only that the city be turned into a desert and a ruin and that for all eternity no one reside there. He threw himself on the altar and [the Iranlans] sacrificed him on Pentecost before mass was offered to Christ. On the next day there was a cloudburst and [Vashdean] was consumed by fire as he sat by the city gates of Tambur. Hamam subsequently [re]built this [city] calling it after himself, Hamamashen. [70] And Mangnos' prayer was realized. In one night 3,000 men died, others fled, and the city remained a ruin.

That same year Heraclius arose and killed Xosrov. He remembered [g60] the oath made between himself and Tiran. He made [Tiran] *marzpan* of all the Armenians and he himself went to Constantinople. Eight years later, Mahmet's sister's son, Abdrhahim,

came with much baggage bringing 18,000 cavalry with him, demanding taxes from Armenia. Now Tiran sent [a message] that the entire army assemble for war. However Vashdean's son, Jojik, prince of Iberia, finding the time favorable, had caused all of Armenia (Hayk') to rebel so that they would not go to [Tiran]. When Tiran saw that all was up, he spoke these words before his army of 8,000 soldiers who had come willingly "Oh people of Christ, it is better for me to die than for the Church of God to become tributary to the Tachiks."

The next day they assembled at the foot of Grgurh [mountain] and fought in the plain to the south, from morning until the third [71] hour. While they were still putting the Tachkastank' to flight, suddenly the prince of Anjawac'ik', [Sahurhh], rebelled, came out [of the ranks], and turned his sword upon the Armenian troops. Now Tiran, tearing through the troops, encountered Sahurh and said: "Stop, apostate Sahurh, for Christ has made you fall into my hands." And he cut off Sahurh's head with his sword. Yet he himself was martyred there by the sword [together] with two princes. Then the Armenian army was trapped and every man lost his life. But some fled and passed across to swampy Oj ("Snake") city. [Remains of] those killed by the Iranians [1 *ms.*: *i tackac'* "by the Taciks"] are kept in the reliquary of the martyrrium renamed Holy Host. Abdrhahim passed through Hark', to Basean, to Virk', and to Jawaxk' and to Vanand. He took taxes and returned to Tachkastan.

The same year the church at Ashtic' monastery [1 *ms.*: Ashtishat] was pulled down. That church was founded by St. Gregory. [The churches of] Karapet at Innaknean, Matravank' in Taron, the great cathedral at Astghaber, and the cathedral of patriarch Nerses at T'il in Ekeaeac' district [were also pulled down]. [72] The *marzpan* is buried at the door of the cathedral in Jiwnkert, Taron, in Porp city.

Colophon

This chronology was begun by the Syrian Zenob with [the time of] St. Gregory [and concerns] what had transpired in that place. [Zenob] left a written [account of these events] in the same church. It seemed agreeable to others succeeding [Zenob] to keep the list [in] the same [manner], and thus, each abbot wrote of the events of his own time—what prince of this house displayed what brave exploits and left them. [These compilations] grew and were called the *History of the Syrians*. For those abbots who are recorded until T'odik were all Syrians, and that place [*tun*] conducted its writing and worship in Syriac until T'odik. The latter changed the system and drove all the Syrian clans out of the monastery.

However, I did not find [information] written down concerning the [events] transpiring from Trdat until Xosrov king of Iran in the [73] house of the Mamikoneans. Then I learned from some people that in the Edessa area there was a certain cleric named

Marmarha who had that [material] written. I went and saw the writings he had which had been composed in that very monastery of Innaknean. He had got hold of it from some Iranian soldier or others who had polluted the country, and the book, I believe, thence fell into his hands. [I] translated from it 28 episodes and [there were] 10 episodes that I had in my possession. I put them together, making 38 episodes, collected them into one book, and left them to the clergy [g62].

In the time of the reign of Heraclius when Xosrov was dead, by order of Nerses, *kat'oghikos* of Armenia [this was written], in the principality of Vahan Mamikonean who was called Kamsarakan on his mother's side, the 32nd [prince in succession] from Mushegh called *K'ajakorov*—written and bound in the monastery of Glak at the door of the blessed [church of] St. Karapet, in which are [found] the relics of Karapet. I have left an unforgettable memorial of myself and of my own [family]. [I am] bishop Yovhan Mamikonean, 35th [bishop in succession] from Zenob, first bishop of the Mamikoneans, in the 4th year of the patriarchate of Samuel.

Now as for those others who sat as monastics after them, and [74] what was wrought in their times in this house is seen in [this] same book. For thus have we modelled ourselves on our predecessors.

Again I, lord Yovannes, bishop of the Mamikoneans, beseech the clergy of the Church of God that when you make a copy of this composition let nothing appear ridiculous to anyone. Instead, rewrite my exemplar fully and without deletions, so that you will be blessed by St. Karapet and in our humble shepherd's prayers, and completely by Christ. May God reward you scribes and you, the readers [g63].

Amen